

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows, substituting any amended claim(s) for the corresponding pending claim(s):

Please cancel Claim 13, without prejudice.

Please add new Claims 15-18.

- 1 1. (Unchanged) A method of converting text to speech comprising:
 - 2 receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a
 - 3 suffix;
 - 4 for each textual unit,
 - 5 locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and
 - 6 appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

- 1 2. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1 wherein one said textual unit in said list is
2 indicated as not having an associated speech sample in memory and said method further comprises:
 - 3 passing said indicated textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;
 - 4 receiving a speech sample converted from said indicated textual unit from said secondary text
 - 5 to speech engine; and
 - 6 appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1 3. (Unchanged) The method of claim 2 wherein each said speech sample in said
2 memory comprises a processed recording of a voice talent and said secondary text to speech engine
3 comprises a phonetic text to speech engine based on said voice talent.

1 4. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1 wherein a consecutive plurality of said textual
2 units in said list represent a whole word, said method further comprising:
3 for each textual unit in said consecutive plurality of said textual units, locating an associated
4 speech sample in said memory;
5 creating a speech unit by splicing together said plurality of associated speech samples; and
6 appending said speech unit to said output signal.

1 5. (Unchanged) The method of claim 4 further comprising, after said splicing,
2 processing said speech unit to remove discontinuities.

1 6. (Unchanged) A method of pre-processing a text file comprising:
2 receiving a text file;
3 parsing said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one of a word,
4 a prefix or a suffix; and
5 for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units corresponds
6 to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, adding said stored textual unit to a list.

1 7. (Unchanged) The method of claim 6 further comprising, for each one of said parsed
2 textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units does not correspond to one of said stored textual
3 units,
4 marking said parsed textual unit as being out of vocabulary; and
5 adding said marked textual unit to said list.

1 8. (Unchanged) The method of claim 7 where said marking comprises pre-pending a
2 character to said textual unit.

1 9. (Unchanged) A text to speech converter comprising:

2 means for receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a

3 prefix or a suffix;

4 for each textual unit,

5 means for locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6 means for appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 10. (Unchanged) A text to speech converter comprising a processor operable to:

2 receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a

3 suffix;

4 for each textual unit;

5 locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6 append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 11. (Unchanged) A computer readable medium for providing program control to a

2 processor, said processor included in a text to speech converter, said computer readable medium

3 adapting said processor to be operable to:

4 receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a

5 suffix;

6 for each textual unit,

7 locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and
8 append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1 12. (Unchanged) A text to speech conversion system comprising:
2 a text file pre-processor operable to:
3 receive a text file;
4 parse said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one
5 of a word, a prefix or a suffix and
6 for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units
7 corresponds to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, add said stored textual units
8 to a list;
9 and a textual unit processor operable to:
10 receive said list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a
11 prefix or a suffix;
12 for each textual unit, of said list:
13 locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and
14 append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

~~13.~~ Deleted.

1 14. (Unchanged) A data structure including a field for a textual unit and a field for
2 a speech sample associated with said textual unit, where said textual unit is one of a word, a
3 prefix or a suffix.

1 C15
2 B15 15. (New) The data structure of claim 14 further comprising a field for a phoneme
2 that said textual unit starts with, and a field for a phoneme that the textual unit ends with.

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1 16. (New) The method of claim 7 further comprising:
2 passing said marked textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;
3 receiving a speech sample converted from said marked textual unit from said secondary
4 text to speech engine; and
5 appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1 17. (New) The method of claim 8 further comprising:
2 passing said marked textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;
3 receiving a speech sample converted from said marked textual unit from said secondary text
4 to speech engine; and
5 appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1 18. (New) The text to speech conversion system of claim 12 wherein:
2 said pre-processor is further operable to:

3 for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units does
4 not correspond to one of said stored textual units, marking said parsed textual unit as being out of
5 vocabulary and add said marked textual unit to said list; and
6 said textual unit processor further comprises:
7 a secondary text to speech engine operable to receive said marked textual unit and
8 convert said marked textual unit into a speech sample.
